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FAKULTA PŘÍRODOVĚDNĚ-HUMANITNÍ A PEDAGOGICKÁ

Katedra: Anglického jazyka

Studijní program: B7507 Specializace v pedagogice

Studijní obor: Anglický jazyk se zaměřením na vzdělávání

Německý jazyk se zaměřením na vzdělávání

KRÁL JIŘÍ VI. Z HISTORICKÉHO A UMĚLECKÉHO POHLEDU

THE REPRESENTATION OF KING GEORGE VI IN HISTORY AND IN POPULAR CULTURE

Bakalářská práce: 2012–FP–KAT– 054

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.....

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Počet

stran	grafů	obrázků	tabulek	pramenů	příloh
55	-	5	-	17	1CD

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Jméno a příjmení: Alena Wróblová
Osobní číslo: P09000728
Studijní program: B7507 Specializace v pedagogice
Studijní obory: Anglický jazyk se zaměřením na vzdělávání
Německý jazyk se zaměřením na vzdělávání
Název tématu: Král Jiří VI. z historického a uměleckého pohledu
Zadávací katedra: Katedra anglického jazyka

Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Cílem bakalářské práce je analyzovat rozdíl mezi skutečnou postavou krále Jiřího VI. a jeho vyobrazením ve filmu Králova řeč a stejnojmenné knize.

Rozsah grafických prací:

Rozsah pracovní zprávy:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: tištěná/elektronická

Seznam odborné literatury:

Bennet, John W., King George VI : His Life and Reign, London:
Macmillian, 1959

Logue, M.; Conradi, P., The King's Speech. How One Man Saved the British
Monarchy, London, Quercus 2010

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Bricardová I., Monarchie moderní Evropy, Paříž, Perrin 2000

Bradford, S., The Reluctant King, St.Martin's Press: 1989

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Datum zadání bakalářské práce: 27. dubna 2012

Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce: 26. dubna 2013



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V Liberci dne 27. dubna 2012

Čestné prohlášení

Název práce: Král Jiří VI. z historického a uměleckého pohledu
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Osobní číslo: P09000728

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Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my supervisor, Michaela Mudure, Dr. Phil., for her kind help, useful comments and valuable advice. I would also like to thank Ian Wienert, B.A. for correction and final adjustment. Last but not least I would like to thank my family and friends for their endless tips, inspiration and support.

Anotace:

Tato práce se zabývá postavou krále Jiřího VI. z historického a uměleckého pohledu. Vychází ze tří hlavních zdrojů: oficiálního životopisu samotného krále, z deníků a poznámek králova osobního logopeda Lionela Logueho a posledním zdrojem je oscarový film *Králova řeč* z roku 2010.

Práce je členěna do tří hlavních částí. První část se zabývá královskou dynastií Windsorů, ze které král Jiří VI. pocházel. Druhá část je věnována životu samotného krále podle oficiálního životopisu od Sira Johna W. Wheeler-Bennetta. Ve třetí části je čerpáno z osobních deníků Lionela Logueho, který králi pomáhal zvládnout jeho vadou řeči. Poslední část bakalářské práce se zaměřuje na zobrazení krále ve filmu *Králova řeč*.

Klíčová slova: Král Jiří VI., Lionel Logue, *Králova řeč*, vada řeči

Summary:

This thesis focuses on the representation of King George VI according to historical sources and in popular and high culture, i.e. in the book *The King's Speech*, which was a diary of King's personal speech therapist Lionel Logue and the Oscar-winning film of the same name.

The thesis consists of four parts. The first part focuses on the royal family Windsor, in which the future King George VI was born. The second part is dedicated to his life according to his official biographer Sir John W. Wheeler-Bennett. The third part derives from personal diary and records of Lionel Logue, who helped the King with his speech impediment. The last part of the thesis focuses on the representation of the King in the film *The King's Speech*.

Key words: King George VI, Lionel Logue, *The King's Speech*, speech impediment

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Introduction

“He who controls the past controls the future. He who controls the present controls the past.”

George Orwell, 1984

Every country has its own history and tradition. Whether customs are good or bad, bloody or peaceful they are a part of the history of the people that live in the country. In today's hectic world people are not very much interested in the history of their country. They are even less interested in the history of other countries. Today people have the opportunity to find everything on the internet which implies that it is not necessary to know everything, if we can find it at any time.

In the past this easy access was unthinkable. People narrated the history from house to house, town to town. In the remote past there were the so called chroniclers who wrote about the most important events in the country. Even twenty years ago people still had to go into physical archives and libraries in order to study the past.

Today with the help of World Wide Web people have become too indolent to search and dig for information. This might be the reason why so many films are made about history. However, people should be at least interested in the history of their own country. It is the history of their ancestors. People should also learn from history. It expands our knowledge, shapes the way we see things in today's world. History is a kind of connection between the past and the present.

The problem is that we live in a fast-moving time where many people do not think history matters. It is easier to show people what happened in the past on the wide screen in the cinema or on TV. However, a historical film presents past events through eyes of producers, screen writers and actors. If a film wants to become popular, then the producers have to make history fascinating. Today's people want to

have fun watching history.

On the other hand, making history fascinating does not guarantee complete historical accuracy. It is not possible to narrate history without making changes, as it is not possible to transform a book into a film without leaving out some passages or changing the plot. We can question many historians, we can dig in the archives, but the history will never be told as things actually happened. We can only assume how events really happened and if we want to check the authenticity of our report we have to look into approved sources, archives and books, which can sometimes be quite difficult.

This is also the case of the impressive film “*The King’s Speech*”. People were fascinated by this film because a member of the royal family had a problem like an ordinary person. Prince Albert was such an interesting character of British history that producers and writers chose him for their artistic purposes. It did not only increase the interest in figure of the King, but also the film received four Oscars: for the Motion Picture of the Year, for Tom Hooper, the best Achievement in Directing, for Colin Firth, the best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role and for David Seidler, the Best Writing, Original Screenplay.

Although the film was extraordinarily successful it only focuses on one part of King’s life or only on the impediment of George VI and his fight with it, this thesis will try to describe his whole life and also how he was represented in history and popular culture.

1. The Windsor Lineage

“A love for tradition has never weakened a nation, indeed it has strengthened nations in their hour of peril.”

Sir Winston Churchill

The Windsor family is like no other family in the world. It is the royal family reigning in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of certain countries of the Commonwealth. The dynasty has ruled the British Empire or Commonwealth¹, since 1917 when the Monarchy changed its name from Saxe-Coburg-Gotha to Windsor. The family was originally German and there was considerable anti-German sentiment during World War I. The name was adopted as the official name by the proclamation of King George V and it remained the family name of the British Royal Family (*The British Monarchy: The official website of, 2009*). However, if we consider the family of Queen Victoria and her son King Edward VII, the lineage Hannover and Saxe-Coburg-Gotha and Windsor has sat for almost two hundred years on the throne.

1.1 George V- (reigned between 1910-1936)

The first King of the Windsor Lineage was George V, the second son of Edward VII, who acceded to the throne after the sudden death of his older brother, Prince Albert Victor, the Duke of Clarence.

George V was not only the first King of the House of Windsor, but also was the father of six children, two of which were the next two Kings, King Edward VIII,

¹ The foundation of Commonwealth was established in 1931 by the Statute of Westminster. The original states that belonged there were: Australia, Irish Free State, Union of South Africa, Canada, Newfoundland, New Zealand. The Monarch remained the Head of these states. The relationship to the British Crown was finally solved in 1949; member states were allowed to choose a system of government, that includes a republic.

who abdicated because of his love for a divorced woman and George VI, who succeeded his brother. According to Sarah Bradford, George V and his wife Queen Mary were not very good parents to their children. They did not realize that the first nursemaid was mistreating both of the boys Prince Edward and Prince Albert. This probably left an impact on the Princes until their adulthood. Edward was prone to outbursts and his brother Albert had digestive difficulties, stammered and was abnormally shy (*Bradford, p.25*).

George V also was the first King who adopted the relatively new medium of radio to broadcast across the Empire at Christmas. On Christmas Day, 1932 he used the new BBC radio service to speak to all people of the Commonwealth and the Empire. His broadcast was enormously popular, and began a tradition (*McDowall, p.171*). In 1935, the King celebrated his Silver Jubilee, but the next year he died and his eldest son Edward succeeded to the throne, but only reigned for a short time (*The British Monarchy: The official website of, 2009*).

1.2 Edward VIII (reigned between January 1936– December 1936)

Edward VIII ruled the British Commonwealth from January 1936 until December 1936, exactly 326 days. It was the shortest reign of any British monarch since the disputed reign of Lady Jane Grey nearly four centuries earlier. The reason for his abdication was his love for an American woman, Mrs. Wallis Simpson. She was twice divorced but Edward VIII was in love with her and was determined to marry her (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.268, 287*).

On December 11, 1936 Edward VIII gave the Royal Assent to His Majesty's Declaration of Abdication Act, by which Edward VIII and any children he might have were excluded from succession to the throne. In his speech he explained the reason for his abdication, '*I have found it impossible to carry the heavy burden of*

responsibility and to discharge my duties as King as I would wish to do without the help of the woman I love. This decision has been made less difficult to me by the sure knowledge that my brother, with his long training in the public affairs of this country and with his fine qualities, will be able to take my place forthwith without interruption or injury to the life and progress of the empire.

And now, we all have a new King. I wish him and you, his people, happiness and prosperity with all my heart. God bless you all! God save the King!’ (The History Place: Great Speeches Collection, 2012).

Edward was made Duke of Windsor and married Wallis Simpson. At the beginning of World War II he lived in France and in 1940 when France fell, he escaped to Lisbon. Until his death he lived outside the United Kingdom. Edward VIII died in Paris in 1972 and was buried at Windsor. He was never crowned. His coronation was planned on 12th of May 1937. Edward VIII abdicated 6 months before his planned coronation.

1.3 George VI (reigned between 1936-1952)

The younger brother of Edward VIII, Albert, the Duke of York unexpectedly became the King. He took the name George VI as a tribute to his father (*Logue, p.3*). He worked very hard to adapt to the role into which he was suddenly thrown (*The British Monarchy: The official website of, 2009*). He lived through World War I and II, but the biggest fight he had to fight was his speech impediment which probably started at the age of eight.

His biggest supporter was his wife Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, known under the name Queen Mother. The Prince did not have it easy with the daughter of Earl and Countess of Strathmore. She was famous for her beauty and when she was introduced to the society every man wanted to marry her. The Duke fell in love with

her but his proposal for marriage was refused. The reason was, the Duke sent an errand boy to ask Elizabeth for him. She refused him for two years however, in January 1923 she finally agreed. They got married on 26th April 1923 in Westminster Abbey. They had two daughters Elizabeth and Margaret.

Queen Elizabeth stood by her husband in every tense situation. She stayed very active in public for her whole life and she was very popular for that.

Queen Mother died when she was one hundred and one years old. She outlived her husband for fifty years and also her younger daughter Princess Margaret for seven weeks.

Another person who played an important role in the life of the King was an Australian speech therapist Lionel Logue. He worked with the King for twenty-six years and helped him to improve his speaking. The King was very grateful to Logue for his help and support, therefore, he appointed Lionel Logue a Commander of the Royal Victorian Order. This order is awarded to those who have demonstrated a personal service to the British Crown.

2. The Representation of King George VI - In John W. Wheeler-Bennett's Official Bibliography

"The highest of distinctions is service to others."

King George VI

2.1. Early Childhood

King George VI was born on 14th of December, 1895, as the second son of the Duke and the Duchess of York. The Prince entered the world on a very sad day in the calendar of the royal family. On this day the royal family remembers the death of Prince Albert in 1861, the husband of Queen Victoria and the death of Queen Victoria's daughter Alice in 1878 (*Wheeler-Bennett, p. 3, 5*).

On 17 February 1896 he was baptised at the Church of St Mary's, Sandringham, taking the names Albert Frederick Arthur George, even though within family he was always known as "Bertie" (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.9*).

According to Sir John W. Wheeler-Bennett, the future King had a deprived childhood. His parents failed in their parental role when they did not realize that the nurse ignored him and mishandled him.

Like other English upper-class children in the late Victorian and Edwardian eras, Prince Albert and his siblings were brought up by nurses and a governess. Once a day, children were brought to their parents usually at tea time. For the rest of the day they were left entirely in the hands of the nurses, footmen and other servants (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.15, 17*).

This fact that a child was not brought up by his own parents might have been the cause of Prince Albert's chronic stomach trouble. The reason would be a sadistic

and incompetent nurse, who showed a preference for the elder of the brothers, Prince Edward, who by his family was called David.

The nurse's devotion was so fanatical that in order to show the superiority of her power over him to that of his parents, she would twist and pinch Prince Edward's arm before bringing him into the drawing-room. As a result, a crying and bawling child was quickly returned to his nurse, who miraculously quietened him.

Prince Albert was ignored by the nurse to a degree which amounted virtually to neglect. She completely disregarded his wants and comforts and he was frequently given his afternoon bottle while driving in a C-sprung Victoria, a carriage notorious for its bumpy ride. According to his official biographer John W. Wheeler- Bennett, the practice partly lead to chronic stomach trouble, this may well have laid the foundation for the gastric complaint from which he was later to suffer so acutely (*Wheeler-Bennett, p. 17*).

The little Prince admired very much his older brother Edward, whose lead he followed into all kinds of mischief. The blame for these pranks usually seemed to have been attached to him rather than to his brother or sister. Very soon he gained a reputation for childish disobedience (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.18*).

For his fifth birthday his father George wrote to him: *"Now that you are five years old, I hope you will always try & be obedient & do at once what you are told, as you will find it will come much easier to you the sooner you begin. I always tried to do this when I was your age & found it made me much happier"* (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.18*).

The fifth birthday was to be the last on his nursery childhood. Less than a month later, in January 1901, Queen Victoria died at Osborne on the Isle of Wight. The life of Edward, Albert and their sister Princess Mary (born 1900) changed

completely. Their father, as heir to the throne, began to fulfil his duties by travelling all over the British Empire for eight months. The children were left in the hands of King Edward and Queen Alexandra who loved their grandchildren very much. The two Princes started their education. First they were removed from their beloved nurse 'Lalla' Bill to masculine discipline in charge of Frederick Finch, who at first was thought to be their nurse and later the trusted adviser. The second change in their lives was that the Princes did not go to school, instead they were taught at home by Henry Peter Hansell, a thirty- nine years old teacher, who was supposed to be a part of their lives until they reached adulthood. Nevertheless, he did not succeed in his role as a teacher and both of the boys were sent away to school (*Wheeler-Bennett*, p.22, 23).

During the time their parents were away the relationship between the brothers grew stronger and solidier. Edward took care of his younger siblings but as Albert was getting older and nearer puberty, he did not like Edward's solicitude. It was not a brotherly rivalry. Edward was not only older, but he was also charming and funny and of course both of the boys knew that Edward would become the king.

To Prince Albert fate was not as kind as to his brother. He suffered from digestive problems and he had to wear splints during the day and night which should have helped him to straighten his legs. He was also an easily excitable, nervous child who was sensitive and prone to take his weaknesses and mistakes too seriously. This would find expression either in acute depression or in outbreaks of anger, as much as at himself as at others. However he did not stammer when he first began to talk. The stammer appears to have developed during the age of seven or eight.

It is also well known that in case of stammer the frequency is higher with left handed people and the Prince was naturally left handed. At that time he was forced to

write with his right hand which often caused psychological difficulties. This is called a 'misplaced sinister' and may well have affected his speech (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.27*).

According to psychiatrists, writing with the left hand is an inborn ability. If a left-handed person is forced to write with his other hand, it can lead to serious malfunctions which can be a burden to his or her life. These malfunctions make it harder for the person in terms of relationships, family relations, work and as well as the potential to cause health problems. Children that are retrained to write with their opposite arm suffer from complexes of inferiority and most of the time they are criticized for their laziness and bad behaviour.

The left-handed can also have troubles with their fine motor skills, speaking, pictorial imagination, comparison and memory. Left-handed people, who are retrained to write with their other hand, have to expend thirty per cent more force for everyday life than a natural right-handed person (*Pergler, 2002*).

This coercion probably have affected Prince's trouble but we cannot say for sure. His stammer cut him off, in some respects, not only from his parents but also from his brothers and sister too. His teacher, Mr. Hansell, reported that Prince Albert was unfit for oral work and disinclined to take part in French and German conversation exercises. Also he had difficulties in expressing himself in his own mother tongue.

At the end of his twelfth year, Prince Albert completed the second stage of his life. The first stage was dominated by the nurse 'Lalla' Bill and the second by Finch and Mr. Hansell. His second schoolroom Prince had passed 'most creditably'. He had done 'extremely well' in English, History and French, his oral French being

almost perfect. His Mathematics was 'very fair'. Only in Geometry was he below the average students (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.33*).

2.2 Cadet His Royal Highness Prince Albert of Wales

As was expected, both brothers followed the steps of their father in their career. Prince Edward entered the Royal Naval College in February 1907 and his brother followed him two years later. The difference was that Edward had to stay at the Royal Naval College only until he took over his duties as Prince of Wales. From Bertie was expected that job as a naval officer would be the mission of his life. He found himself a member of the Grenville Term where he lived with seventy other thirteen-year-old boys. Most of them had material physical, mental and psychological advantages and also they had spent years at private schools. His father gave orders that his son was to be treated in all respects exactly as any other cadet. This instruction was intended to prevent any favouritism being shown to him as the son of the heir to the throne even though to create equality was impossible.

Both of the brothers had a hard time at the College. They were not used to being in contact with other children of the same age or to being away from their parents.

Bertie had another disadvantage. Until his brother left the College, he was always compared with him. Bertie was not an excellent student; his teacher gave him a piece of advice to focus on sports. (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.48*)

The goal to which every naval cadet looked forward from the first day of his appointment was the final training cruise. After four years at the Royal Navy College, in January 1913 Albert went on a training stage on the cruiser *Cumberland*. This was next stage in his training as a naval officer.

In September 1913 he was given a rank: second lieutenant on the battle ship *Collingwood*. He used his gained experiences when World War I burst out. He sailed with *Collingwood* up to North Scotland but after three days he had the first of series of gastric difficulties which were to hamper his war service and caused him acute suffering in body and in mind. He was diagnosed with appendicitis and underwent a surgery.

After the surgery Prince Albert continued with his career at the War Staff of the Admiralty. Soon, the office routine began to be monotonous and he yearned for the day when he could re-join his ship. He took part in the battle of Jutland and in 1918 he was transferred to the Royal Air Force. He was very active until the end of the war, even though he still suffered from gastric difficulties (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.77, 100*).

When peace came, he became a student at Trinity College in Cambridge for a year (like many other young naval officers, whose education had been interrupted by the war) where he studied history, economy and civics. This acquired knowledge was useful when he unexpectedly became the King (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.127, 131*).

During the year at College he had to fulfil his public duty. He became a member of Worshipful Company of Drapers and also had to accompany important political personalities, as the King's representative. He attended several public functions in various parts of the country, each of which meant speaking publically. This was not easy for Prince Albert, because the stammer still bothered him even though he worked with specialists.

According to Wheeler-Bennett, Prince Albert was more successful when he spoke impromptu than from a written text although every public appearance meant pain and grief to him (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.134*).

2.3 The Duke of York and his marriage

King George V watched his son with close attention and was pleased with his progress. To encourage him and support him, in June 1920 he gave him the rank of Duke of York, Earl of Inverness and Baron Killarney. Since then his father sent the Duke of York to deputize him to social events as the King's representative. Prince Albert created an admirable impression in the society. The reports of his prowess at the Coronation of King Ferdinand and Queen Marie of Rumania at Alba Julia were forwarded to London (*Wheeler- Bennett, p.135, 146*). Besides his duties as a member of the royal family and State visits abroad, he was engaged with the work of the Industrial Welfare Society. Moreover, he was in love with Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, the youngest child of Earl of Strathmore.

According to Wheeler-Bennett, the future wife of King George V, Elizabeth was born on 4th of August 1900. From her mother, Lady Strathmore, she inherited much of her capacity for human understanding, as well as her vitality of spirit and variety of interest. Lady Elizabeth also owed to her mother serenity of soul which in later life was to prove so great a source of comfort both to herself and to her husband (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.149*).

Her early childhood was divided between the castle of Glamis in Scotland, which is thousand years old, and St. Paul's Walden Bury in Hertfordshire. During World War I, the castle of Glamis became a convalescent hospital and Elizabeth assisted her mother and sisters in entertaining the patients. After the war she entered the society in London, where her charm, grace and beauty of face and spirit brought her a host of admirers. Among them was the Duke of York. He had to be patient with her for over two years and finally on 13th of January 1923 his proposal was accepted. The wedding was solemnized in Westminster Abbey on 26th

of April 1923. For over five hundred years there had not been a royal wedding at the Abbey and the whole Empire was interested in this event (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.149, 151*). Prince Albert and his wife became the Duke and the Duchess of York.

For the Duke the marriage was a kind of emancipation and it brought him much for which he had long craved in deprivation- love, understanding, sympathy and support from a home environment. As years passed, he became established in his own home with his wife and daughters, his family life came to be his salient joy and comfort (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.155*).

Two years after the wedding the first daughter of the Duke and Duchess of York was born, Princess Elizabeth Alexandra Mary, the future Queen Elizabeth II. There may have been some uncertainty, because the first born was a girl, but there was no doubt as to the felicity which her advent had conferred upon her mother and father (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.209*).

The second daughter was born in summer 1930 and she was christened Margaret Rose.

2.4 Speech Therapist- Lionel Logue

After the birth of his first daughter Elizabeth, the Duke continued visiting factories and giving speeches during official royal events. The speech impediment was still bothering him and was obvious in his opening speech at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1925. In his speech there were moments when he failed to articulate but he kept on resolutely to the end. It soon became clear that courage and resolution were not sufficient. If he were to take a full part in the life of the country he had to be cured of his speech defect.

The Duke had had enough of specialists who claimed to be able to cure his stammering and he was thoroughly discouraged by a series of failures. After the

Duchess persuaded him to try one more therapist, the Duke went to see Lionel Logue. They met for the first time on 19th of October 1926, in Logue's office on Harley Street. Logue kept his own record of the meeting with the Duke of York where he wrote that the Duke had left his office with a hope in his heart (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.213*).

Lionel Logue's career had been in many ways phenomenal. He was in no way a qualified medical man and his gift of healing speech defect was revealed to him in dramatic and almost miraculous ways during World War I when he helped soldiers, who were told that they would never speak again. Later he specialized and became highly proficient in the art, and in 1924 he came to practice in London. His fame soon spread through London and in 1926 he was brought into contact with the Duke's private secretary (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.213*).

Logue's ways of treating patients were different from other treatments that were used in London. Doctors used electrical shocks, but this method proved to be highly ineffective. In contrast, Logue used a combination of physical and psychological methods. He gave his patients the impression that he believed in his own power of healing and he was able to inspire them with a similar belief both in him and in themselves.

His treatment consisted of teaching the patients to breathe correctly and if it was necessary he advised his patients to develop their lungs by physical exercises and control their diaphragmatical rhythm (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.213*).

The Duke was deeply impressed by Logue's confidence and sincerity, so he placed himself in the hands of the speech therapist and after one month's treatment the Duke was very satisfied. He wrote to his father that he had been seeing Logue every day and that he had noticed a great improvement in his speaking and also in

making speeches and that he wished that he had found Logue earlier (*Wheeler-Bennett, p. 214*).

The Duke's confidence and progress became noticeable during his speeches in Australia, at the opening of new building of Parliament, and in New Zealand, where the Duke and his wife sailed during their world tour. The speeches were highly successful, especially the one in Canberra. This achievement gave him faith in himself and also in front of his father. He was now able to speak fluently and forcefully (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.215, 226*).

2.5 The Death of George V and the reign of Edward VIII

The 1930's were the most tumultuous years of the 20th century. The prosperous 1920's ended with the Stock Market Crash in Wall Street which began an economic crisis. This helped Adolf Hitler on his rise in 1933, when he became the Chancellor of Germany.

These six years between 1930 and 1936 were quite tranquil years for the Duke. He had to fulfil his job as the King's Representative during the King's illness. But the King did not get any better and he died on 20th of January 1936.

The Duke's older brother became King Edward VIII. This new age did not last very long. The salient features of King Edward's reign were his desire for economy and for making changes which should bring his life and environment into greater compatibility. His popularity grew and grew because he liked everything fashionable, modern and he came of a generation for whom speed was the essence of life. It was Edward's intention that his reign should be characterized by hard work and modernity. Very soon he got tired of his daily duty. But the most fateful thing was that King Edward decided to resign because of his love of Wallis Simpson, which was not acceptable to the government (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.268, 287*).

2.6 The reign of King George VI

King George VI was the so-called reluctant King. He was not as charming and charismatic as his brother Edward but he was reliable and trustworthy even though he did not believe that he could fulfil his duty. He told his relative that he had never wanted this to happen that he was unprepared for it and that he was only a Naval Officer. He got an answer that his father George V asked the same question when he became the King. And the answer was that there was no better preparation than a Navy training because it developed his pragmatic common sense (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.294*).

After five months on the throne, King George VI was to be crowned on the 12th of May, 1937. The circumstances of the accession of King George VI were far from normal. Usually there is an interval of time between accession and the Coronation day of about eighteen months. The first six months were dedicated to the full mourning for the predecessor. Time was also needed for the preparation of the Coronation ceremonies. The Coronation date had been established for the abdicated King Edward VIII. The current King had decided that he would keep the same date (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.301*).

According to Wheeler-Bennett, the ceremony in Westminster Abbey was of great spiritual significance. It had to establish the position of the Sovereign as the 'head of our morality'. The Coronation was also to show that the Church of England still embodied the religious soul of the nation, and that the King represented the State and the Archbishop the Church (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.301, 305*).

The King was admittedly nervous about his stammer, because he had to read his Oath to his people and it was to be broadcast all over the world.

Mr. Logue was asked again to help the King with his speech. About two weeks

before his coronation the King had a speech in St. George's Chapel at Windsor castle. The King spoke under the stress of strong personal emotion, but the speech was so successful, that Mr. Logue heard a man in the crowd saying to his wife: "*Didn't the Archbishop say this man had a speech defect?*" And his wife replied: "*You shouldn't believe all you hear, dear, not even from an Archbishop*" (Wheeler-Bennett, p.310).

Immediately after the coronation the King began his duty and he also continued with the tradition of Christmas Speeches initiated by his father. In the 1937 Christmas Speech he informed his listeners that the Queen and the King wanted to send a word of gratitude for the love and loyalty his people had given them. He had also promised to try to be worthy of his people's trust (Wheeler-Bennett, p.315).

Although the King made a beautiful speech, he could not stop the events that were going on in Europe. Hitler was taking over Europe and the only thing that the King did not want was to declare war. The reason was clear; he had lived through World War I and did not want to experience the same again.

Although the Prime Minister of Great Britain tried to use the Appeasement Policy with Adolf Hitler, the policy of making concessions to the dictatorial powers in order to avoid the conflict and to maintain peace. However, the politicians of Britain and France allowed Hitler Anschluss with Austria. On top of that Prime Minister Chamberlain pledged to give Germany all the areas of Czechoslovakia with German population more than 50%. At the Munich Conference the, without the Czech authorities consultation, Britain and France agreed to give Hitler this border area. However, Hitler expanded his criteria, demanding all the Sudetenland and later in March 1939 he seized the remainder of Czechoslovakia. It was clear that the Appeasement Policy had failed and war was the only solution.

The worst nightmares of the King came true on 3rd of September 1939. The British Ambassador in Berlin Sir Neville Henderson demanded that the German government stop the invasion of Poland. This did not happen and the Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain declared war on Germany.

On this day the King spoke to his Nation. It was his famous speech that was used for the title of the film “The King’s Speech” (see Appendix 1, p.46). The King tried to give a message of unity to his nation and the Empire. He proved that he cared for his people and for the principles of justice and freedom however he did not show any concern about people in Central Europe, who were affected by the war from the beginning. With this speech he earned respect around the world and united his people, however, people from Sudetenland had to move out otherwise they were discriminated against.

During the first four months of the war there were many false alarms in Great Britain and the feared air strike did not take place yet so children that were evacuated could go back home. These months were a kind of disappointment to people, therefore, the King uttered in his annual Christmas Speech a supportive message that if the New Year brought peace, they would be grateful. If it brought another fight, they would not fear it.

This wish unhappily did not come true. The Germans were planning an invasion of the British Isles. The plan was code-named Operation Sea Lion. The Battle of Britain took place between July and October 1940. In September 1940 during attacks Buckingham Palace was hit many times. The King and the Queen were at Buckingham Palace at time of the bombing. There was never at any time the slightest idea that the King and Queen would leave the country (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.463*).

The possibility of leaving London, however, had to be faced and a number of houses were selected in various parts of the country to which Their Majesties might go. Their protection was entrusted to a picked body of officers and men from the Brigade of Guards and the Household Cavalry, known as the Coates Mission, who stood ready night and day to escort the King and Queen to a place of safety or to defend them against surprise attacks by German parachute troops (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.464*).

The bombing of Buckingham Palace was a factor of considerable importance in unifying the Monarchy with the people of Britain and of the Commonwealth. Even more than before the King and the Queen felt as one with their people. The King wrote in his diary that he felt that their tours of bombed areas in London were helping the people who had lost their relatives and homes. He also felt that he had found a new bond with his people (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.469*).

Britain remained under permanent pressure and Hitler tried to sever the supply lines so that the British people would starve. He tried to batter them into submission by airborne attacks. The King continued to share the dangers with his people and he also encouraged them by his presence in London.

A new phase in the war began on 22nd June, 1941 when Germany invaded Russia. Six month later Pearl Harbor was bombed and United States entered the war. Nevertheless, the first seven months of 1942 were an unrelieved disaster for the Allied Forces and the German armies crossed the Don on a broad front. The year 1942 brought bereavement to King George. His youngest brother, George, the Duke of Kent was killed while on duty.

As in every other year, the King had to speak at the opening of the Parliament on 11th November. The King rehearsed with Logue and their periods of rehearsal

were sacred from interruption except in cases of highest urgency (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.554*).

After three years of fighting a change finally came for the benefit of the Allies when the United States entered the war (1942), the King was very happy about it. He wanted to visit his troops but the situation did not allow it, because it was very dangerous.

In 1944 the US-forces approached Normandy, the King spoke again to his nation as he did every Christmas and every time it was necessary. In this speech he sent a message full of hope to his people.

The importance and influence of this appeal for national dedication and intercession had been much in the King's mind. He had given great care to its composition (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.607*). Finally in May 1945 the war was over and the streets of London were full of joy.

The first brighter moment after the war came in 1947, when the marriage of Princess Elizabeth and Phillip of Greece and Denmark was announced. The King was not very enthusiastic about the marriage, because Philip was not considered to be a good husband for Elizabeth, however in the end the King agreed.

Even though the King's speeches in public were improving, his health was getting worse. When the war ended his health condition was quite bad but he still went on a trip to South Africa. Two months after the trip he was suffering from long-lasting cramps and his doctors recommended that he cancel the trip to Australia and New Zealand (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.766*).

Despite all efforts, the King's complete recovery was still elusive and he was becoming more and more tired. A prolonged period of recovery was prescribed and the King's health improved day by day. However, his doctors were still anxious

because of the King's illness. New examinations confirmed their inkling. The King was suffering from a malignant growth. Despite the risk of cardiac complications, the doctors decided to remove the whole left lung and the King underwent surgery which was highly successful (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.788*).

In the coming year 1952 the Royal family celebrated the good health of their King. According to Wheeler-Bennett, on the 5th of February on a very cold day the King went for a hunt because he was feeling better. At dinner he was relaxed and contented. He retired to his room and at about midnight he went to bed. Very early on the morning of February 6 his heart stopped beating. The next day a servant found him in his bedroom. The cause of his death was not the tumour, but thrombosis, which hit him when he was asleep.

The news about the death of the King reached Princess Elizabeth, the new Queen and Prince Philip during their visit to Kenya (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.800- 803*).

The age of a reluctant king was over. He had succeeded to the throne without any preparation. He stood by his nation during the worst times. He was the living symbol of everyone's steadfastness. He never wavered in his faith that, with God's help, the cause of freedom would prevail. Even when Buckingham Palace became the target of air strikes he did not run away. He stayed in his Capital.

In his broadcasts and his visits to the Empire and to Commonwealth countries he made himself the friend of the people all over the World (*Wheeler-Bennett, p.804*).



Picture 1: The King To His People, September 3, 1939



Picture 2: May 8, 1945 - King George VI waves from the balcony of Buckingham Palace

3. The Representation of King George VI -

In Logue's Diaries

"The proper use of the mother tongue is the first evidence of civilization and refinement."

Lionel Logue

Prince Albert, the Duke of York or King George VI, three names and only one person that represents this name, a man that according to the book *The King's Speech* saved the British Monarchy.

The life of the King was chosen many times as a topic of books. It is possible to find at least twelve books about the life and reign of George VI.

The latest book about King George VI that was published enables to look on the life of the King from other point of view. This book is based on the diaries of the speech therapist Lionel Logue which were collected and put in order by the grandson of the therapist, Mark Logue. It describes the treatment and also shows the extraordinary relationship between the King and the speech therapist. The author does not focus only on the King himself but he also describes the impressive life of Lionel Logue, who was born in Australia in 1880 though his ancestors came from Dublin.

Lionel Logue was born in College Town in South Australia. He discovered his passion for elocution by accident. He fell in love with the story of *Hiawatha*. He loved the rhythm of the words which sounded like spoken music to him and therefore and he wanted to study elocution. At the age of sixteen Logue received elocution training from Edward Reeves. Later he became the assistant of Reeves (*Logue, p. 19*).

In Australia the growth of the elocution movement was also supported by a growing divergence between their English and the version of the language spoken back in Britain. For some, the distinctiveness of the Australian accent was a badge of national pride. When Lionel was twenty-three years old, he opened his own elocution practice. His elocutionary recitals drew large and enthusiastic audiences.

The outbreak of war gave Lionel the opportunity to volunteer for military service. He was rejected on medical grounds, and therefore he put his energies into organizing recitals, concerts and various amateur dramatic performances in Perth. Logue also attempted to apply some of his knowledge about the voice to help servicemen suffering speech disorders as a result of shell shock and gas attacks. He succeeded with some, including those who had been told by hospitals that there was nothing that could be done for them (*Logue, p.30*).

His first success appears to have been with a former soldier from Perth, Jack O'Dwyer. The soldier had been gassed at the battle of Ypres in August 1917 and in London he was told that he would never speak again. When the soldier came to see Logue, Logue was convinced that the gas had affected the throat, the roof of the mouth and the tonsils, but not the vocal cords. Although this was only a theory, only after two months O'Dwyer was discharged and quite cured. Logue described the treatment as 'patient tuition in voice production combined with fostering the patient's confidence in the result'. He used a combination of physical and psychological mixture, the same method which he used in the future with the King.

In 1924 Logue and his family moved to Great Britain. They settled in the west of London and Logue went around local schools offering his service to help deal with children's speech defects. However, the money for his family was not enough, therefore he decided to take a risk and open praxis on Harley Street. This

street was the so called the heart of Britain's medical establishment.

The Duke of York visited Lionel Logue at this street in 1926. According to Mark Logue, between 20th October 1926 and 22nd December 1927 the Duke visited Lionel eighty-two times. During this period the Duke began to manage difficult consonants over which he had previously stumbled. Each breakthrough prompted him to throw himself back into his exercises with still more determination. Before he left on a world trip to Australia and New Zealand he faced a test of his speaking abilities. At Pilgrims Society, where its members, a mix of politicians, bankers, businessmen, diplomats and other influential figures, were used to hearing some of the best speakers in the world, the Duke decided to confront the challenge head on. He prepared a speech with Logue. Those that were present at the dining club had not expected much more than a few hesitant words. Instead they were addressed by a smiling, confident speaker, who spoke with a surprising confidence and conviction. Even the newspapers reported that the Duke was rapidly improving as a speaker and that he had practically solved his speech impediment (*Logue, p.68, 71*).

The main event of the King's trip was the opening of the Australian Parliament. According to Mark Logue, the Duke had slept badly the night before because of nerves. Even though it was extremely hot in the parliament, the duke pressed on, putting in what all concerned considered to be an impressive performance.

When the Duke and the Duchess came back from their world trip, the Duke continued to work with the speech therapist. During the following sessions the Duke worked on tongue twisters that Logue prescribed for him. Such as, *'Let's go gathering healthy heather with the gay brigade of grand dragoons'* and *'She sifted seven thick-stalked thistles through a strong thick sieve'*. In these exercises the Duke

focused on syllables “g” and “h” or “s” or “t”.

Despite the huge social gulf between the Duke and his therapist, their professional relationship turned into friendship because of Logue’s frank and straightforward style and the enormous capacity for work that the Duke possessed. Logue even praised his patient for never missing a session with him. During their sessions the Duke realized it was not only the will but also the grit, the hard work and the self-sacrifice that the future King put into these exercises.

The Duchess also played an important role supporting her husband even when he appeared to be struggling more than usual. During his speeches when he was about to give up, his wife squeezed his fingers as if to encourage him to continue and he invariably did continue (*Logue, p.78*).

The newspapers were trying all the time to find out how and with whom the Duke worked on his speech impediment. They even tried to interview Lionel Logue, but at first he refused to say anything about the Duke. He also did not want to confirm that the Duke was his patient.

In the 1930’s the Duke was being required to get involved in the functioning of the Crown which required more speeches. During this period the relationship between Logue and the Duke was causing mixed emotions. The Duke did not need Logue’s services very often. Nevertheless, Logue maintained his contacts with the Duke, writing to him regularly and continuing to send him congratulations and a birthday book. For the Duke’s birthday these books had become something of a tradition. Regardless of where he was or what he was doing, Logue would send the Duke one or more carefully selected volumes on 14th December for the rest of his life. Even after the Duke became King, he would respond with a thank-you letter written in his own hand, in which he would inevitably talk about the progress he was

making with his speech as well as giving brief insights into other things going on in his life (*Logue, p.89, 90, 95*).

As a part of his goal of bringing greater respectability to his profession, Logue also succeeded in setting up the British Society of Speech Therapists in 1935. The Duke was among those whom he told and the Duke replied that he was very glad to hear that Logue had fulfilled his dream and that he hoped it would be a success. Later in 1948, Lionel Logue asked the King to become patron of the College of Speech Therapists and the King agreed

The Society's aim was to establish the profession of speech therapy on a satisfactory basis. Later, the Society was to set up a National Hospital School of Speech Therapy, where after a two-year course, students qualified as Medical Auxiliaries. They studied a range of subjects such as phonetics, anatomy, paediatrics, orthodontics and diseases of the ear, nose and throat (*Logue, p.101*).

In December 1935, the Duke wrote to Logue that although it took a lot of effort over practising his speeches and he still had to change words occasionally, he was very pleased with the continued progress. He also wrote that he was losing that "sense of fear gradually, depending on how he was feeling and on what subject he was to speak. Lionel Logue thought that their work together was over but he was wrong (*Logue, p.102*).

During the year 1936, there were three Kings on the British throne. King George V (died in January 1936), Edward VIII (who reigned only for 327 days) and his brother King George VI became king after Edward.

According to Mark Logue, the Duke had no desire to become King, although many people desire all their life of having the top job; he was not one of them. However, the newspapers greeted the resolution of the crisis and the arrival of the

new king with enthusiasm. Lionel Logue was among those who celebrated the succession of the Duke of York. He wrote to King George VI his usual birthday greeting saying that he might be permitted to offer his very humble but most heartfelt good wishes on the King's accession to the throne. It was another of Logue's dreams coming true. He offered his services to the newly succeeded King in the New Year (*Logue, p.116*). It did not take long before Logue received a call on 15th April 1937, asking him to come and visit the King at Windsor Castle. The reason soon became clear; the King was to be crowned in Westminster Abbey. For the King, the main cause for concern was the ceremony itself, particularly the responses he would have to give in the Abbey. The Archbishop suggested trying another voice coach, but the King refused saying that he had full confidence in Logue (*Logue, p.124*).

The teacher and the patient worked on the text of the speech that was planned to be broadcast. It was also recorded in case something did not work properly. Logue noted into his diary on the 10th of May, two days before the Coronation, that His Majesty improved every day, was getting good control of his nerves and his voice was getting some wonderful tones into it. Logue wanted him to be a marvellous King (*Logue, p.128*).

The morning newspapers commented both on the Coronation itself and on the speech to the Empire. That evening was a triumph for the King. Listeners abroad were also pleasantly surprised by the fluency of the supposedly stammering King. The compiler of *Detroit Free Press's* radio notes was bluffed by what he had heard coming loud and clear over the ether from London (*Logue, p.131*).

After the coronation, the King was able to relax although he was very busy fulfilling his King's duty. His speech impediment was not cured completely. With Logue's help he was improving and speeches became a kind of routine. However, the

housemen were worried about the King, because he was going through a lot of pressure and a lot of hard work. According to Mark Logue, the King was overtired and did not have time for himself. Lionel Logue wrote in his diary on 20th July 1937 that to overload the King with work had an impact on his speech and the State Opening of Parliament was only a few months away. The speech passed off successfully and the *Sunday Express* described it as a triumph, *'He spoke slowly but there was no hesitation or stammer. Indeed the words took on a dignity and actual beauty from the tempo that he had wisely imposed on himself'* (Logue, p. 134).

Another problem was if King George VI would follow the tradition of his father's Christmas Speeches. He was still reluctant because he continued to feel the usual trepidation about any public speaking engagement. In the end, he decided to follow the tradition and he again consulted and practised with his friend and speech therapist Lionel Logue. As a sign of acknowledgement, the King gave Logue a photograph of himself and his family in their coronation robes as well as a box, in which was a beautiful replica of a silver tobacco box and a pair of gold sleeve links in black enamel with the royal arms and Crown. With this gift, the King told Logue that he could never thank him enough for all that he had done for him. This Christmas Day (1937), as Mark Logue writes in *The King's Speech*, was for Logue, one of the most beautiful days in his life (Logue, p.141). Lionel Logue spent the Christmas Days with the royal family and they appreciated the presence of a person that helped the King and became not only his teacher but also a close friend.

In 1938, Europe was moving towards war inexorably. The King was still fulfilling his duties. He spoke at the State Opening of Parliament and he was preparing for an important journey to Canada. Later he got an invitation from President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to visit across the border to the United States.

These visits were extremely important at this time. They were meant to strengthen Britain's bonds with the two North American powers. It was also deliberate attempt to shore up sympathy over there before the conflict with Nazi Germany, which seemed inevitable (*Logue, p.149*).

The inevitable happened on the 3rd September 1939 and Logue was summoned to the Palace and again went through the whole speech with the King. Logue marked all the pauses between words to make it easier for the King to pronounce. According to Mark Logue, there was some kind of sadness in the King's voice as he read and Lionel tried his best to cheer the King up with reminding him how nervous the King was before his coronation which he approached with equal trepidation (*Logue, p.164*).

The next day, the newspapers reported that the King had consented to have fifteen million copies of the text printed and sent to every household in the country. It was decided that the Post Office would not handle this massive mail of two hundred-fifty tons of paper and the money that would be spent on the printing was thought to be spent elsewhere.

War or no war, the King had to fulfil his duties, in November he spoke at the State Opening of Parliament, in December he talked to his people through the radiobroadcast in his second Christmas message. In this year's speech he used a poem by a teacher at the London School of Economics; Minnie Louise Haskins entitled '*God Knows*'. With this poem he gave his people hope and that they should believe in God who will help them.

According to Logue this poem had a huge and positive impact on popular moral and became very popular. Under the title '*The Gate of the Year*' it was widely published and reproduced on cards. Its words had a deep impact on the Queen, who

had it engraved on brass plaques and was to have it fixed to the gates of the King George VI Memorial Chapel at Windsor Castle, where the King was interred. The words of the poem were also read at the Queen's state funeral in 2002 (*Logue*, p.169).

In the following year (1942) the King spoke to his people on Empire Day (24th of May). Logue again was summoned to the Palace to go through the speech with the King. However, Logue suggested only minor changes to the speech. The next speech was the annual Christmas message. This year the speech was different from the previous ones. The King talked about people being conscious of the dark shadow of war especially at Christmas. It was a message of thankfulness and of hope to God, of hope for the return of peace and good will to this Earth. He also spoke of the great contribution being made to the war effort by the other members of the Empire and also the Americans. The newspaper were full of praise of the royal performance saying that it was the most mature and inspiring broadcast that he has ever made (*Logue*, p.185).

After four years of fighting, in 1943, the war was beginning to turn well for the Allies. The King wanted to visit his victorious armies in the field, but the situation was too dangerous for him to go. However, everywhere he went, he received a predictably enthusiastic reception (*Logue*, p. 190).

The following year, the war was moving towards another decisive turning point. Logue received a call on 1st June 1944 and he was asked if he could come to Windsor the following day. The reason for another King's speech was the D day, an extremely classified operation, which brought an end to the war, but it still took another eleven months. The King uttered in his speech that this time the challenge was to fight to win the final victory (*Logue*, p. 195, 196).

That Christmas there was another message to the nation and the King decided to broadcast this time without Logue, so that Logue could spend Christmas with his family. After his speech, Logue telephoned the King saying that his job was over. The King replied that not at all was Logue's job over and that it was the preliminary work that counted and that was where Logue was indispensable.

The end of war was celebrated on the streets of London. The King, together with the Queen and their daughters stepped out onto the balcony of the Buckingham Palace to acknowledge the cheers of the ecstatic crowd below. On the 9th of May the King spoke again to his people, but this time under better circumstances than five years ago, when the war started.

According to Mark Logue, the King's public speaking may have been getting better and better, but his health was getting worse. He got easily tired and he had to cancel trip to Australia and New Zealand.

His friend Lionel Logue also did not have a wonderful year. He even was so ill that he could not leave his flat for a certain time. However, both of them got better and could celebrate Christmas and the King did not need Logue's consultation before he broadcasted his speech, he only asked Logue's opinion.

In the following year the King returned to London at the end of February, when he resumed a limited programme of audiences and held an investiture. Nevertheless March brought bad news, the doctors ordered the King to rest, reduce his official engagements and cut down drastically on the smoking that had aggravated his condition (*Logue, p.217*).

The King's health appeared to continue to improve through that year 1949. On Christmas he brought another message to the nation, the Commonwealth and the Empire. In his letter to Logue he said that the Christmas broadcast still ruins his

Christmas and that he was longing to get it over (*Logue, p.217*).

The last Christmas message was delivered by King George VI in 1951, but he sounded as if he were suffering from a particularly heavy cold. Sometimes his voice dropped to almost a whisper. This was the first time when his Christmas message was not broadcast live, but had been pre-recorded, which is another explanation for King's poor health.

The royal family began the New Year with the hope that the King would get better. Eventually he did and on 5th February he enjoyed a day of shooting. The next morning he was found dead in his bed. The cause of death was not cancer, but rather a coronary thrombosis- a fatal blood clot to the heart- that he suffered soon after falling asleep.

On 26th February Lionel Logue wrote to the King's widow that the King had honoured him by allowing him to help the King with speeches and that no man had ever worked as hard as the King did to achieve such a great result (*Logue, p.225*).

The Queen Mother had replied that she probably knew better than anyone how much Logue had helped the King.

That May, 1952, Queen Elizabeth II, mindful of how close Logue had been to her father, sent him a small gold snuff box that had belonged to the King with message that the King would wish Logue to have it (*Logue,p.226*)

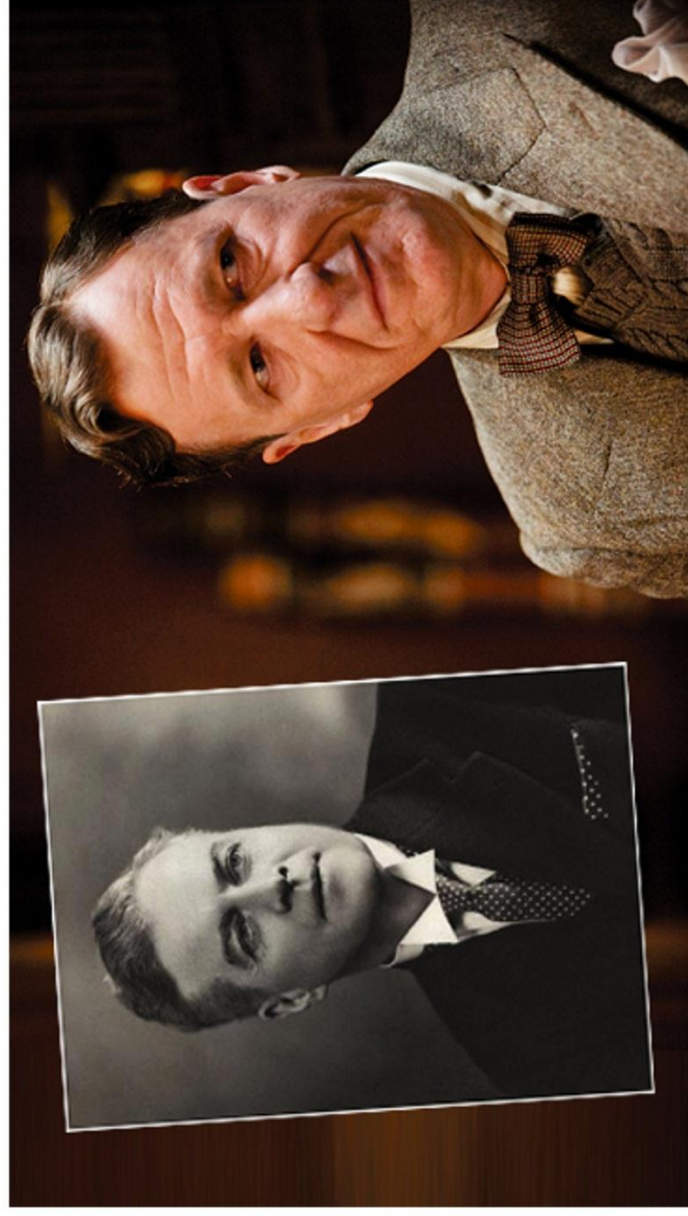
Only two years after the King, his teacher, speech therapist and also a friend, Lionel Logue died. Maybe because his services were no longer required, his health was failing. He died on 12th of April 1953 of kidney failure aged seventy-three. The obituaries appeared in Britain, Australia and America informing that he was one of the leading specialists in the treatment of speech defects and was mainly responsible for helping King George VI to overcome the impediment in his speech.

Logue's funeral was held on the 17th of April and both the Queen Mother and the Queen sent representatives to his funeral (*Logue*, p. 227).

This book by Mark Logue and Peter Conradi gives us a different point of view on the life of the Prince, the Duke and the King. He is shown here as a friend in need, who appreciates help from his therapist. Even though the relationship between Logue and the King was always formal, according to this book, in a way, it was special. The explanation of this would be that the relationship was not only between teacher and his student but King George VI considered Logue as a close friend.



Picture 3: Image of book cover for the King's Speech



Picture 4: Lionel Logue (left) and his film representative Geoffrey Rush (right)

4. The Representation of King George VI -

In Film

“Everything I learned I learned from the movies.”

Audrey Hepburn

When a film adaptation is made, there are some facts that have to be considered. A film adaptation is a work of art which is influenced by the director, the script writer, and the actors. There is always a number of questions which viewers should ask when they watch a historical film. There is, for example, the question of fidelity or accuracy of the film. It is not only about accuracy in history but also accuracy of the things that are said in the film.

For people who just go to the cinema to relax, it is not necessary to search for facts after seeing the film. They take the historical film as a fact. However, someone who does not believe what was shown in the film, he goes and tries to find a more accurate version in history.

The same case happened with *The King's Speech*, the Oscar-winning film, a film about a royal member who stammered. The film fascinated most people because there are not many people who do know history exactly and most people who went to see the film did not even know who George VI was and that he stammered.

The film begins with the scene when Colin Firth as the Duke of York speaks for the first time publically at the closing of British Empire Exhibition² at Wembley in 1925. The speech that the Duke gives seems to be causing him a real pain and problem. After that the film jumps to year 1934.³ The Duke is working on his speech

² According to Sir John W. Wheeler-Bennett it was second opening of British Empire Exhibition, on the occasion of celebration of George V, twenty-fifth anniversary on the throne.

³ As was said in two previous chapters, the King began his sessions with Logue in 1926, not in 1934.

impediment with a specialist who gives him marbles which he shut put into his mouth and should try to speak with them. The Duke tries very hard to read but the marbles irritate his throat and he gives up this way of treatment very quickly. After that he tells his wife that he does not want to see more therapists. However, the Duchess is not satisfied with the fact and she goes to Harley Street to visit Mr. Lionel Logue, who is known to have special methods.

The Duchess has an appointment under the name Johnson, so Logue cannot assume that she belongs to royal family, but when he finds out he is quite shocked. He insists that the sessions will take place on Harley Street. Logue begins to treat the Duke immediately. At the first session, the therapist wants to know when Duke's stammer started. The Duke replies that he has always been this way, but Logue assures him that no infant starts to speak with stammer. The Duke admits that it began when he was about five or six years old and he does not know the cause of the stammer. In the first session Logue tries to record the Duke's voice while the Duke is listening to music. It seems that this method is useless and the Duke walks away, but Logue gives him the record as a souvenir. The Duke realizes that he did not stammer at all when he was reciting Shakespeare's Hamlet while listening to classical music. He goes back to Logue and they began to work on his impediment by relaxing his jaw muscles, strengthening the tongue, repeating tongue twisters and also strengthening his diaphragm.

Their sessions consist of several exercises, such as holding the vowel "E", or singing his thoughts with a help of a song. Using this method the Duke tells his therapist that the closest person in his family that he could trust were always his Nannies, but of course not the first one. He continues that the first Nanny did not feed him regularly and that she pinched him when he was about to see his parents at

tea time.⁴

Throughout the whole film, the Duke is shown as he is really suffering from a huge speech impediment. When he gets nervous or his brother is making fun of him, Albert is not able to say a single word. However, in front of Logue the stutter is not so noticeable. The reason is that in time the Duke started to trust Logue and he believed in Logue's methods. The co-operation got better when Albert became the King.

However, their relationship goes through crisis, in a very unsuitable time before the coronation, when the King's subjects find out that Logue is not a doctor and he does not have any qualification. Logue explains to the King that he has never said he was an educated speech therapist and that the only way he learned his art was when he recited in front of people, teaching children to articulate properly and lastly when he did muscle therapy, exercises, relaxation with the soldiers. His job was to give them faith in their own voice and let them know that a friend was listening.

The film moves on to the pivotal scene, where the King speaks his first wartime speech, the King's Speech. Logue is summoned into the Palace and he goes through the speech with the King. In the dry run of the speech, route words and melody are a kind of help to the King.

The film adaptation of a part of life of George VI ends with the King and his wife and daughters going out on the balcony in front of the Buckingham Palace to greet his people.

The very last bit of the film informs the audience, that throughout his broadcasts, George VI became a symbol of national resistance and that the King and the speech therapist stayed friends until the end of their lives.

⁴ According to Wheeler- Bennett, it was not the Duke whom the nurse pinched onto his hand, it was his brother David.



Picture 5: Film Poster

5. Conclusion

“Never, never, never give up.”

Sir Winston Churchill

George VI, with no doubt, was an important but not very well known personality of the British history. Although he was born as the second son and was not dedicated to be a successor to the throne, the fate arranged it that way that he had to substitute his brother on the throne.

In my Thesis I compared three sources where the King was represented. In Wheeler-Bennett's official biography the whole King's life is described in detail. Every important event which had an impact on the King is mentioned. Also every personal letter of the royal family which was connected to the King was copied into the book. What the book does not describe very much in depth, is the relationship between the King and his speech therapist. Wheeler-Bennett mentions Logue only couple times. He does not describe the treatment and also the book does not focus on the impediment very much.

In contrast to the official biography is the book *The King's Speech* which was based on Logue's diaries. It described the whole life of the King, also the life of his therapist and how these two lives met. Mark Logue with usage of his grandfather's diaries described the King through Lionel's notes and medical records. He described the King as patient, hardworking and purposeful. The King was determined to do anything for his curing.

As a complete opposite to the first two sources is the film *The King's Speech*. First of all, the film focuses on only fourteen years of King's life (1925-1939). They also rushed the film from 1925 when the Duke spoke at Wembley, to year 1934. This period according to official sources had been the most important in the speech

improvement of the King but the film simply skips these years. Second of all the film confuses the life of George VI and his brother Edward. Third of all the film industry exaggerates the speech impediment of the King to make the film more interesting. The film made a man with speech impediment a hero. He is described as a strong, powerful man who had no drawbacks. This was probably the intention of the filmmakers. They wanted to show that the King was not above us because of his speech impediment he was closer to everybody. He was displayed as a human being who had to fight his drawbacks and imperfections as each of us.

In addition, the intention of the film makers was probably meant in a good way. People with an impediment should not be rejected from the society, although they are from royal family. With a little bit more accuracy the film could have been even more popular.

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7. Appendix

The King's Speech on 3rd September 1939

‘In this grave hour, perhaps the most fateful in history, I send to every household of my peoples, both at home and overseas, this message, spoken with the same depth of feeling for each one of you as if I were able to cross your threshold and speak to you myself.

For the second time in the lives of most of us, we are at war. Over and over again, we have tried to find a peaceful way out of the differences between ourselves and those who are now our enemies; but it has been in vain. We have been forced into a conflict, for which we are called, with our allies to meet the challenge of a principle which, if it were to prevail, would be fatal to any civilized order in the world.

It is a principle which permits a state in the selfish pursuit of power to disregard its treaties and its solemn pledges, which sanctions the use of force or threat of force against the sovereignty and independence of other states. Such a principle, stripped of all disguise, is surely the mere primitive doctrine that might is right, and if this principle were established through the world, the freedom of our own country and of the whole British Commonwealth of nations would be in danger. But far more than this, the peoples of the world would be kept in bondage of fear, and all hopes of settled peace and of security, of justice and liberty, among nations, would be ended.

This is the ultimate issue which confronts us. For the sake of all that we ourselves hold dear, and of the world order and peace, it is unthinkable that we should refuse to meet the challenge.

It is to this high purpose that I now call my people at home and my peoples

across the seas, who will make our cause their own.

I ask them to stand calm and firm and united in this time of trial. The task will be hard. There may be dark days ahead, and war can no longer be confined to the battlefield, but we can only do the right as we see the right, and reverently commit our cause to God. If one and all we keep resolutely faithful to it, ready for whatever service or sacrifice it may demand, then with God's help, we shall prevail.

May He bless and keep us all' (*The British Monarchy: The official website of, 2009*).